

Palmer (*Ent. Rec.* **87**: 222) notes it as local and common on *Ribes* in Aberdeen, although it was described as being abundant in gardens there in the late nineteenth century. Harper and Langmaid (*Ent. Rec.* **87**: 139) found bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*), *Salix aurita*, *S. atrocineraea*, *Sedum roseum* and hazel were larval foodplants in the Hebrides. For Scotland I think it can be concluded that the distribution and life history of *grossulariata* are imperfectly known; Palmer's comment does point to a decline in one urban population compared with the last century which is in accordance with that in England.

The evidence points to a perhaps steady decline in this moth during the first half of this century in many parts of the British Isles, and especially in urban areas in the later years. However in N.W. Kent there appears to have been a further decline affecting the urban population during the past decade, accompanied by desertion of *Euonymus japonicus*, and perhaps to a considerable extent the soft fruit bushes of gardens and allotments. I suspect that this more recent phase is not confined to N.W. Kent. Are there still flourishing colonies of *grossulariata* on *E. japonicus* within the London area, and elsewhere in urban S.E. England? To what extent are the larvae still found on the soft fruit bushes in these regions?

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New records for British ants.

Myrmica specioides Bondroit, 1918, first recorded for Britain as the synonymous *M. puerilis* Staercke, 1942 (Collingwood, 1962) disappeared from its first recorded site in a gravel bank just north of Deal through sea erosion and human trampling. The species probably still occurs elsewhere along the Kent coast since the first specimen was actually taken at Herne Bay in 1958 by J.C. Felton and both Felton and I subsequently found it on a bank at Seasalter (Felton, 1963). It is a pleasure to record that this uncommon British species was found on Bawdsey Quay on 1.x.90 nesting in an east facing sandy bank backed by shrubs above the roadway v.c.25 Grid ref. TM3338. Except in North Europe, this is not a coastal species and

occurs widely in continental Europe in dry grass habitats and is the most xerothermophilous species of the better known *Myrmica* according to Seifert, 1988. This ant has a more lively aggressive behaviour than the similar *M. scabrinodis* Nyl., stings freely and in England at least is more brightly coloured.

Tapinoma ambiguum Emery, 1925 was not recognised as a good species because of the difficulty of separating the female castes from the similar *T. erraticum* Latr. Kutter, 1977, however, gave it specific status and more recently Seifert, 1984, showed clearly that morphological overlap in the female castes was minimal although often found in similar biotopes in Central Europe. *T. ambiguum* may be recognised by its smaller general size and the very shallow clypeal emargination in the worker and queen compared with *T. erraticum*. The male is easily recognised by the subgenital plate which has widely separated thin lateral lobes compared with the more closely approximated broad lobes of *T. erraticum*. In Britain *T. ambiguum* occurs in the New forest where I have examples from SY21 and SY23 and in Cranborne Chase on chalk. Emery, 1925, also knew *T. ambiguum* from England from examples sent from the New forest by both W.C. Crawley and H. Donisthorpe who were aware of the difference in male genitalia from *T. erraticum*. *Tapinoma* specimens I have seen from Devon, West Sussex, Surrey and Kent have all been *T. erraticum* which probably also occurs in the New forest but it will be interesting to verify this.

Formica sanguinea Latr. continues to flourish in the Eastern Highlands both in the Speyside forests of Abernethy and Glenmore and in Deeside where recent captures at Glentinar and Invercauld, NO39, NO49, extend its known occurrence westward from Banchory and Kincardine O'Neil NO69, NO59.

Lasius meridionalis Bondroit should replace *L. rabaudi* Bond. which has been shown by Seifert, 1988 and others to be a different species. *L. meridionalis* occurs very widely on the East Anglian heaths and other locations, under the name of *L. rabaudi*, are given by Barrett, 1977 in the Provisional Atlas, *Lasius alienus* Foerst. was found in the undercliff below Haverigg near Millom, v.c.70 SD3137 well to the north of other known locations in England. Another new location is Wilsford South Lincs TL0243 at the same site where both *Formica cunicularia* Latr, and *Myrmica schencki* Em, are still to be found.— C. COLLINGWOOD, City Museum, Leeds LS1 3AA.

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Hazards of butterfly collecting — Nigeria 1989

I shall never forget 11.vi.1967. I was seated on a dilapidated VeloSolex moped kindly loaned to me by a member of the Danish Volunteer Service who was on home leave. I was chugging along the Agege Motor Road, an hour's drive from my parents' house in Lagos. It was imperative to find a good butterfly place within striking distance of town. I did not have a driving license at the time, and in any case my father was deeply possessive of the car.

Four miles north of Agege, after a giant church, a promising road led into the secondary forest, mainly consisting of cola-nut and cocoa plantations, with open spaces of newly cleared ground of nearly virgin forest, too — *ju-ju* — sacred to the ancestors. And there were lots, and lots, and lots of butterflies.

During the next three months I visited and revisited the locality. There were always new things to be found. Two colleagues in Lagos, Michael Cornes and John Riley, began accompanying me from time to time. We discovered that the small river running through the place probably provided a band of riverine forest with contact to the Ilaro Forest Reserve much further north, the closest intact rainforest to Lagos.

I went back to Lagos for another three months in 1969. The 4 m. NW of Agege locality was still splendid. In the intervening years Cornes and Riley had revisited the site and kept meticulous records. During my three months in Nigeria in 1969, hundreds of net-days were consecrated on the locality. Every visit turned up new things. All were recorded in the card index that my two friends maintained. And they continued to visit. I paid brief visits to Nigeria in 1970, 1971 and 1972. On each I managed yet a visit to Agege — one or two new species were always found.

In 1978, after much additional work by Cornes and Riley, we sat down and consolidated all the records for publication (1980. *J. Res. Lepid.*, **18**(1): 4-23), including two more gained by me on a brief sentimental visit to the locality. To our surprise the total came to 376 species, one of the largest numbers recorded in a limited locality anywhere outside of the Amazon area, and nearly half of all species ever recorded in Nigeria west of the Niger River.